



Review

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Pacific empire of the United States. Consider, for example, how useful the popular images of the "Chinaman" were for state projects designed to enlist popular support for U.S. military operations in Asia from the Spanish-American to the Vietnam Wars, as well as for the crusade to "contain" Communist China.

One way of explaining these images involves, therefore, long-standing American fantasies of China as a site of unlimited opportunities (millions of potential customers and Christians) and hazard (despotic or communist "Yellow" Perils). In this context discourse on race provides a means for displacing varieties of imperial desires. It serves to mask colonial adventures as righteous warfare. Moy is right to note that American liberal humanism finds no exit out of the dilemma it has helped to fashion; Mark Twain's advice to the "person sitting in darkness" was, after all, to remain concealed. Whether or not an identity politics emphasizing visibility can alter this configuration remains to be seen. Moy himself both embraces potentialities of becoming visible and is skeptical of their effects on dominant culture. Perhaps what is needed are strategies that acknowledge the constructedness of identity and avoid the ideological closure that the racist texts addressed by Moy labor to accomplish.

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***Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Sources.* By Keith D. Miller. New York: The Free Press. 1992. 282 pp. \$22.95.**

The best chapter in Keith D. Miller's excellent study of Martin Luther King Jr.'s eloquence is the seventh, "Voice Merging in Washington and Montgomery." In the Lincoln Memorial Address ("I Have A Dream") and the Montgomery eulogy ("How long"), King is in the fullness of his powers. He moves, with these speeches, in and among the Founding and Refounding Fathers, doing decisive classical utterance, and yet, strong poet that he is, he is, with this utterance, also apart from those Fathers, different, redefining American nationality. Miller's reading of the Lincoln Memorial Address is a major contribution to the ongoing revaluation of King's artistry and leadership. In its examination of King's sources, of his logic, this reading is just as meticulous and perceptive as Glen E. Thurow's magisterial reading of the Gettysburg Address. Here indeed is a set of American texts and a sequence of American readings to give visiting scholars.

Just as Thurow shows us how revisionary Lincoln is in the Gettysburg Address, correcting and amending Jefferson's words, Miller gives us King's defiance and rebuke in the Lincoln Memorial Address, his reopening of the case seemingly settled in the Gettysburg Address. Lincoln's pronouns are deeply figured, cagily put, and so are King's, especially his turns on "we." What a structure this speech has, what an argument and logic. And when Miller turns to do the Montgomery eulogy, "How Long," he is just as deft in presenting its context-

ture, in letting us see its construction, King repositioning phrases from ancient Abolitionist anthems.

Some readers will remember the 1990 plagiarism flap, Stanford scholars invalidating King's dissertation, and how briefly worrisome it was. It seemed to add another count to the indictment a certain important American public made of King. Communist agitator, womanizer—plagiarist. Did this person indeed commune with the Founding and Refounding Fathers? Did he deserve a Day in the calendar of National Holidays? Miller brushes right past this count in the indictment. King did not take seriously academic rules concerning intellectual property. He “adhered instead to folk preachers’ assumption that language is always shared and never owned.” As Miller convincingly shows us, King's borrowings and recombinations were “standard practice in the folk pulpit.” What's more, Miller shows us how brilliant King was in his elaborations and restatements. King studied Niebuhr and Tillich, but knew the work of the popular Protestant ministry, the sermons and texts of J. Wallace Hamilton and Harry Emerson Fosdick.

It is therefore now possible to get on with the serious reading of King's sermons and speeches. Miller demonstrates King's actual literary tradition, that of the folk pulpit, and in so doing helpfully changes the protocols in our reading of King. Readers of *American Literature* should have this book in their personal libraries.

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***The American Challenge: An Introduction to the Study of American Civilization.* By Rodica Mihăilă. Bucharest: Editura Universităţii. 1994. 317 pp. No price given.**

What does the exploration of American culture look like from the distance of Romania? That is, in effect, the question which an American literature professor from the University of Bucharest has asked herself; and the answer is more holistic than would now typify the practice of American Studies within the twelve-mile limit. Writing in a supple English, Professor Mihăilă has turned a rich body of secondary works into primary sources in offering a fine, gently critical overview of the development of an interdisciplinary field. Defined initially as the struggle to locate the uniqueness of the national experience (from Emerson to Turner), American Studies is shown as professionalized in the 1930s, then as flourishing through the resonant interpretations of mostly nineteenth-century literature provided by the myth-and-symbol school. About half of *The American Challenge* addresses the sixties and thereafter, as the consensus unravelled under the impact of greater sensitivity to race, ethnicity, and gender and under the aegis of postmodernism.

Mihăilă's intended audience is not identical with the membership list of, say, the American Studies Association; and she makes no pretense of innovativeness. Graduate students in American Studies would nevertheless find her book a useful